

**Neighborhood Networks
Monthly Conference Call
“Designing and Implementing a Summer Youth Employment Program”
April 27, 2004**

Operator:

Good afternoon. My name is Amanda and I will be your conference facilitator. At this time I would like to welcome everyone to the Neighborhood Networks Summer Youth Employment Conference Call. All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise.

After the speakers' remarks there will be a question and answer period. If you would like to ask a question during this time, simply press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, press the pound key.

Thank you. Ms. Schachter, you may begin your conference.

Vickie Schachter:

Thank you, Amanda, and good afternoon to everyone and welcome to Neighborhood Networks' monthly conference call. Today's call topic is "Designing and Implementing a Summer Youth Employment Program." Before I introduce our speakers, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind Multifamily Neighborhood Networks center staff to visit our website at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org. If you have not already done so, please check out the Strategic Tracking and Reporting Tool, which we call START. START is designed to assist Multifamily Neighborhood Networks centers to plan, design, develop and implement programs and services such as summer youth employment. For more information, again, I recommend you visit our Web site or call us, toll free, at 888-312-2743.

I'd also like to remind all conference call participants that a verbatim transcript and audio of today's call will be made available and you can access it on the Neighborhood Networks Web site in about a week.

Today's conference call guest speakers are David Brown, Steven Fields, and Julie Gunkelman. David Brown is the Executive Director of the National Youth Employment Coalition, NYEC. NYEC is a

nonpartisan network of over 275 youth employment training and development organizations dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming life long learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens. You can access the NYEC website at www.nyec.org.

David's work includes spearheading NYEC's policy work, tracking implementation and informing the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act and leading an effort to connect youth employment and juvenile justice. Prior to joining NYEC, David was a Senior Policy Analyst with the National Governor's Association for six years where he focused on youth related state policy issues. Over the past 25 years, David has benefited from a range of youth policy and program experiences within both public and nonprofit youth serving organizations at the national, state and local levels. In the early 1980's, David administered the summer youth employment program in Peekskill, New York.

Our second speaker will be Steven Fields. Steven has a Masters in Social Work. Currently, Steven is the director of adult programs for the Oakridge Neighborhood Networks Learning Center. Oakridge Neighborhood is a HUD funded housing project that manages 300 units. Oakridge Neighborhood Services Adult Programs provides an array of education and social services programming, including job training for adult residents and the summer youth program.

Steve received his BA in social work from the University of Iowa, his Masters in public administration from Drake University, and he is an Iowa State licensed social worker.

Our final speaker and linchpin for today is Julie Gunkelman. Julie Gunkelman has been Director of CHARISM for ten years. CHARISM is a neighborhood-based family resource center serving a multicultural low-income population in Fargo, North Dakota. At the request of the city of Fargo,

Gunkelman is currently leading the organization through an expansion project that will result in an additional neighborhood center in Fargo. CHARISM is an active and collaborative youth enrichment program of which the youth opportunity program has been a part for the past three years.

I'd now like to turn the conference call over to our first speaker, David Brown.

David Brown:

Thank you and good afternoon. As mentioned, I am with the National Youth Employment Coalition and we've been working on many of these issues for many years and I'm going to talk a little bit about just some background around federal support for summer youth employment programming and jobs, a little bit about the current prospects for the summer job market this summer, and then outline some best practices that emerge from my own experience, but also from the programs we recognize that are promising and effective. The Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet) is one of the projects of NYEC that we've recognized to date. Ninety-six exemplary youth employment development programs, many of which are either summer programs or include summer components. And information about PEPNet and those programs can be found at our website which was mentioned earlier --- www.nyec.org.

Overall, many of you are probably familiar with the long term and long standing federal summer youth employment program that actually started as the Neighborhood Youth Corps as part of the War on Poverty in the mid 1960's. That program was funded throughout the '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s. And actually into the 1990's was funded at about \$1 billion a year. That program created summer jobs for low-income youth ages 14 to 21 across the nation.

That particular program, however, although a long-standing program, was repealed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. At that time, Congress decided that stand alone summer jobs programs that

were not connected to year round services and supports have little impact on the long term outcome and earnings for young adults. So they - - when they established the Workforce Investment Act, they merged the year round program and the summer youth employment program into one program and creating a single youth funding stream. Currently, that funding is at about \$1 billion and every local community across the country gets funding through that funding stream which is funneled through local workforce investment boards.

Summer employment is one of the ten required elements for the youth programs under the Workforce Investment Act, but those summer employment activities must be linked to education and career preparation. Under the Workforce Investment Act, the youth dollars also must spend - - they must spend 30 percent of the funds locally on out of school youth and most of the young people enrolled in the program enrolled year round with fewer enrolled for summer only. Therefore, overall they serve many fewer youth and very few communities are providing just narrowly focused summer jobs programs.

To sustain their summer jobs programs, though, many communities have tapped into TANF dollars, local tax levied dollars, or they've expanded their private sector jobs campaign to create summer jobs for young people. So, despite the reduction in federal investment in summer jobs, many communities have found other ways to support summer jobs for young adults.

In terms of the prospects for summer jobs, last summer the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University found that the employment rate for the nations teens during the summer of 2003 was just 36.5 percent, which was the lowest rate for youth - - of youth employment on government record.

This past January only 34 percent of teenagers ages 16 to 19 were employed full or part time, which is also the lowest rate of youth employment since 1965. The Center for Labor Market Studies projects that this coming summer the youth employment rate will be even lower than it was last summer. So the prospects for youth employment are, overall, pretty dim. Teens are traditionally the last hired and the first hired during an economic downturn, and then the last rehired when the economy turns around.

Employers are now tending to hire older youth, college students, college graduates and adults for jobs that have traditionally been youth market jobs. This tends to happen when the labor market is tight. Many employers last summer started hiring adults for the jobs that they traditionally would have hired youth.

Nevertheless, though, many studies have shown that early work experience for young adults does contribute to their earnings later in life and also can promote educational attachment for low-income youth. So there is an important contribution that work experiences do provide for young adults.

I'm going to go over some best practices that we've identified through our work and from our own experiences. The first is that summer programs should be seamlessly integrated with year round activities that are focused on academic gains and supports and services. And these activities should demonstrate the real world relevance of academic subject matter; that the opportunity during the summer is to really demonstrate to young people that what they are learning in school has relevance in the real world and also many programs also provide tutoring activities during the summer so the youth do not lose their education skills.

Many areas across the country are partnering with local school districts and Workforce Investment Act boards to recruit and to connect academics and employment during the summer. Also another

promising practice is that of structuring the programs so that youth can participate in summer programming for two or more concurrent summers to build skills and experiences and responsibilities accordingly. So many programs have looked at having a two-year program.

Also programs can provide opportunities that expose young people to career options that they may have not considered, or to explore career options or industries that they are considering looking into. It's a way to - - clear exploration is a key element that can take advantage of during the summer.

Also many programs don't limit their subsidized work experiences to just the nonprofit or public agencies, but also place young adults in private sector placements to expand the variety of occupations, careers and industries that youth are exposed to. Some of the incentives that folks use to encourage private employers to get involved in some places they will actually be the employer of record and therefore the employer does not have to be concerned about workers comp, although they do provide the funding to support the employment opportunity. Also many programs subsidize the wage either partially or fully, provide pre-employment training to promote retention, and provide counseling and support when issues arise during the course of the summer.

It's also important to include preparation and reflection on work readiness and to ensure that young people are held accountable for their punctuality, attendance, proper attire and how to work appropriately with supervisors and other staff.

Programs should also look to provide opportunities for young people to build technology, communications, teamwork and other soft skills. Also, programs should consider work experiences that allow young people to provide tangible services to their communities and provide time for them to reflect on their contributions.

Group service projects can also provide opportunities for positive peer interaction and youth can actually help identify the community needs that they are seeking to address. Many programs are also looking to incorporate entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship training into their summer programs.

It's also important early in the program to explain, thoroughly and in writing, information about wages, pay periods, pay days and deductions. It's important to allow youth the opportunity to select their workplaces and be interviewed for their jobs so they can try out those experiences. Employers should be encouraged to create job descriptions and complete performance evaluations upon the young person's completion of their summer job.

The work site supervisor should be provided with adequate supervision, should provide the young people with supervision, structure, guidance and clear expectations. And also insure that the worksites have adequate work to keep their young people busy and engaged and to clearly be looking to monitor those sites during the summer. If youth are idle or not held accountable for their time, the experience can be more negative than positive.

Also, a program should look to provide incentives to recognize youth achievement such as awards and ceremonies and trips, but also sanctions for when they are not performing to expectations. Programs should also look to provide supportive services including transportation assistance, bus tokens, and the like. And should also, if possible, provide opportunities for young people to visit employers and colleges and universities. Some programs even provide residential opportunities during summers on college campuses.

Many programs also seek to provide high school credit for summer programs that allow young people the chance to regain their lost credit. Some partner with community colleges and vocational

institutions to help students earn college credit and to connect to higher education before they graduate from high school. And also many programs provide opportunities to link them to part time jobs once they finish the summer job so they can have summer employment - - or part time employment after school and during the school year.

And it's also key that programs document the skill gains and the competencies that young people gain as a result of their summer experience so they can use that toward developing their resume and furthering their career. They need to be able to document and talk about the skills and competencies they gained as a result of their summer experience.

And those are just some ideas of the some of the programs that we've been looking at or incorporate to build a more comprehensive and developmentally appropriate summer programs. Thank you.

Vickie Schachter:

Thank you, David, and I'd now like to turn the call over to Steve Fields.

Steve Fields:

Hello, everyone. My name is Steve Fields and I'm the Adult Program Director for Oakridge Neighborhood Services here in Des Moines, Iowa. We have existed as Oakridge Neighborhood and Oakridge Neighborhood Services since the beginning of the '70s as a multifamily housing development. We currently have 300 units and the Oakridge Neighborhood Services actually services about 730 individuals and family, children and youth in our area.

One of our programs that we're proud of, I guess that's why I'm here today, is our summer youth work program and it's so interesting that Dave talked about some of the best practices. Those are things that we are trying to do for ourselves.

The Bankers Trust Oakridge Neighborhood Services summer youth program came about in the

late 1990's. A lot of initiatives were happening here in Iowa and we were finding that some of the youth, because of funding, were not being able to get in some of those governmental programs.

So what we tried to look at was we tried to go to the private sector to see if business would participate with us in providing a summer youth program that would be comprehensive both in work experience, school experience, job readiness skills, and computers for our youth. So in '96 we partnered with Bankers Trust, which is a major bank here in the Des Moines area, for an eight-week summer youth work program.

And what that entails is it's an opportunity for youth ages 14 to 16 to participate in summer jobs and educational opportunities. The first thing that we look at and do is an interview - - a basic interview and assessment of what the youth is wanting in terms of work; what is their viewpoint about work and how they go about interviewing. Hopefully, before they come in the summer they have different agencies that help them learn how to interview, learn how to fill out applications.

In our program, we help youth realize the importance of a work permit. Here in Iowa it is vital that kids have work permits because there are some areas that they cannot work if they don't have those permits.

Job resource information - we try to help them with local and state resources to locate jobs. We do life skills management and community resources. We help prepare them for job search. We help them develop a resume and cover letters, thank you letters, and interviewing skills. We help them visit companies and schools for more career exploration, and we do some community service.

Generally, what happens is we take about ten youth per summer. Right now I'm up to about 69 applications so it's very, very competitive. The youth interview and are chosen for positions that

are, right now, nonprofit positions in our neighborhood. They have a workweek. They work about 80% of the week from Monday through Thursday at the nonprofits with the site supervisor.

David mentioned evaluation and what not. It is very important that these youth be evaluated. They do a weekly agenda where they sit down with their site supervisors to go over what they're going to do during the week. They do performance evaluations weekly, and they do an action plan for the summer. What is it that you want to get out of work and what are the expectations? It's very important that the youth and our supervisors understand each other so they know and understand each other's expectations.

On Fridays what we normally do is a career exploration day, which entails a couple of things. We find it very important to extend the exploration of careers and business opportunities and resources to youth. So on Fridays they do go out in the afternoon and visit our local colleges and businesses and begin to network. We're finding networking opportunities are very important for them to speak effectively with business companies, to negotiate ideas and contracts and what not. Those are important skills for them to learn, not only now, but for the future.

We also, on those particular days, have a job-training program that they take once a week for an hour and a half. They're learning issues of self-esteem and work development and how to create their resume, how to negotiate for salary, budgeting and finance, job search activities, and decision making. We talk a lot about values and beliefs and what it is to understand those things as they apply in the job environment. Most of them have not been in a job so to really understand what it is to be in that job and to be in a work environment and to have to deal with all of that.

And then of course we have our community service project. Last year, our youth were involved in a

community service project where they went out with cameras, digital cameras and computers, and surveyed the city of Des Moines' dilapidated housing and did a report, a PowerPoint presentation, to our city councilman. And that was important. That was something that needed to be done and it was a community project for them. They sat down and talked about what they were going to do and they actually chose that so we were real happy with that.

I think a couple of things that David had discussed are very, very important to what we do. We do allow for high school credits for both our job training and our computer program. When they complete that computer training they get a credit, a one-fourth credit, for their attendance and participation and completion of the computer training program.

This year - - in years past what we have done is we have contracted with Executrain and they would go through a whole series of Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint and pass those things, and then they would be certified. This year we're going to do it differently. We're going to use that as a reality stamp and really give them simulated office assignments that they can do right there and complete and use our computer training in a realistic way.

Supervision – we have one job coach who manages the whole program. That means going out and overseeing what the youth do at their respective worksites and then we have site supervisors who are in our nonprofit organizations supervising the youth. So we do have major coverage of that.

In terms of our job descriptions, most of the work that youth, who are 14 to 16, perform is in areas of childcare, maintenance, and office work. They're in areas of administrative duties. There are restrictions as to what kinds of work these youth can do in terms of worksites and we really try to stay regulated around those.

In terms of interviewing for our program, we take that very seriously. Some of the programs that they're eligible for, in terms of the state, there's not a real big seriousness with interviewing. There's eligibility in terms of income and they possibly meet with that person for once or twice and then they're in the youth program. We really take heed to good interviewing skills, coming in with nice attire, coming in ready to interview and ready to fill out applications. We take that process very seriously and Bankers Trust and myself are involved in that process in terms of interviewing and selection.

So we do a lot. Hopefully one of the things that we're working on right now is since we have been here, since 1996, we are tracking those students that have gone on to college, or stayed on in school, and have done well in terms of their movement in life. We want to see if Bankers Trust and Oakridge Neighborhood summer youth work program had anything to do with that. We're building that kind of tracking and information so we can expand our program to the state and local level.

Now we're really trying to look at validating what we do and hopefully in the next year be able to connect with our Iowa workforce development and use this model to expand for the year and also to increase the number of people that we can get into the program. Ten might not seem to be a lot, but at least there are ten that would not have a job if we were not there.

So we're pretty proud of our program. Like I said, it is a private sector program. It is a program that has run since 1996. The students that have been involved with our program find it a joy and once they pass 16, somehow they try to come back to be involved, but it's just been wonderful to have a relationship with Bankers Trust, a private sector organization, that continues to fund you every summer and that's real good in this state and for this economy. Thank you.

Vickie Schachter: Thank you so much, Steve.

Steve Fields: No problem.

Vickie Schachter: That was wonderful to hear about. I'd like to introduce our final speaker, Julie Gunkelman.

Julie Gunkelman: Well hello. This is Julie Gunkelman. I am with CHARISM. CHARISM is a neighborhood based family resource center in Fargo, North Dakota. We work with one of two identified low income neighborhoods in the city, and our youth employment program is a year round contract we have with Job Service North Dakota. The objective of our program is to provide youth services to a minimum of 20 youths who are eligible under the Workforce Investment Act in the areas of leadership develop, work maturity life skills, and career exploration.

In listening to Steve, he has an awesome program. Ours is really much more basic. We're working with refugee youths for the most part. I would say over 90 percent are refugee youths. So we're addressing the needs of the English language. We're adding the needs of expectations at the work place such as when you come and when you can leave. Some of the cultures have different ideas of how that works. So that is quite an experience for us to work through.

As a contractor with Job Service, we are responsible to work with Job Service in recruiting the youth. These youth are mostly living within our neighborhood here in Fargo so that recruitment, of course, is done by word of mouth and flyers in our monthly newsletters. We work within the schools and churches to recruit youth. The ages of youth are 14 to 21, but we seem to have more children or more youth interested that are 14 to 17. After that they seem to be able to do things on their own.

We also are available to assist Job Service in gathering assessment information and to assist in

assessing the youth for appropriate placement and programs. We serve as a liaison with the community, the homes and Job Service staff and the work sites. We assist Job Service in placing the participants in work experiences, and we provide career planning and exploration services for the students.

In career planning, we've chosen to use the Choices program in our computer lab and have found it to be very successful. Our refugee youth really enjoy getting on the computers and into the Internet and using our software. And while we do that, then we can also teach keyboarding skills and some very basic word skills.

These kids are not required to come. When they sign up for the program they're asked to set goals and they're asked to set one educational goal and one work readiness goal. The educational goal is often to improve their TABE test scores or to do better in their classrooms. We have so many kids who are in eighth or ninth grade and probably read at the fourth or fifth grade level, and this is a problem. The schools they're dealing with and the employers they're going to have to deal with out in the workforce will require them to do some reading, so it's pretty essential that they master some of the English language and become more literate in it.

And we help them with that through tutoring. We offer tutoring sessions twice a week throughout the year. Those are somewhat well attended depending on the time and the place and the kids; other times they're not. So that's both a success and not as successful as we would hope it to be.

We provide different kinds of training sessions and these are done in monthly workshops. We have learned that works the best. We used to try and do a weeklong series of classes but we tended to lose the kids. So we switched it and we have a half a day on one day and then the next day it's more of a full day where we actually serve a dinner or we take them out to lunch at a fast food place or something.

In our neighborhood, retention is the goal. You can sometimes get them in the door of interest and then the goal is to keep them here. So we have chosen to try and make things as interesting and fun and interactive as we can and give the children as many possibilities to be successful so that we don't lose them. We are in a fairly high gang area for Fargo, North Dakota. There's no comparison, of course, to your big cities, but that element is in our neighborhood because there are so many kids walking around totally unsupervised. And if the children don't have another option then that's what they'll choose and it's very easy to see it in the summer, in particular.

So we try to build up their loyalty to the program throughout the year by offering these workshops, and they will deal with core employment skills, Web design, resume development, and a lot of career awareness and exploration using the Internet. They'll do projects on a particular field that they enjoy. Maybe they'd like to be an astronaut and as they do that research that gives us the opportunity to show them, as David has alluded to earlier, where academic achievements are really relative to what kind of a career you would like to have after school.

We also really promote the fact that these kids are valuable; that they have skills; that they have a lot of qualities that they are important. So we do - - I suppose it would sort of be called some social work as well while we do this. No one here is a licensed social worker but we do become, in essence, like a mentor or a best friend. It's very much on a personal basis. We have about 25 kids enrolled at a time. Some of them have been here for several years, so as David had talked to earlier about the length of the time, we do have kids that stay with us for a number of years. They take classes and as they learn new classes then new ones are added.

I think it's important for them to have a place that's safe. That is another risk in our neighborhood so our center becomes a safe environment where

they're totally accepted and welcome. And so they, in turn, can teach some of the skills that they have learned to others in our various youth development programs.

We take our kids on fields trips to the three colleges we have in Fargo so that they have a chance to go out and see what life is like on the campuses.

We bring in some of the service groups from the colleges to our program to do interactive community service activity with the group so that they can rub shoulders with other kids and get an idea about what life is like outside of our neighborhood.

We work a lot on ethics. We work a lot on the most basic of things, as you cannot leave before your time is up. That may sound really odd, but we have this problem with some of our Somalian kids that when their ride shows up they leave, and it's taken us a while to get them to understand that you can't do that. If you have to work until five you have to stay until five.

We also had another, I think, really interesting instance with several Sudanese boys. One of them had made an appointment and he couldn't keep it so he just told his friend to take his interview for him. We said "Well, that's really not very ethical," and he looked at us and said, "Well, the fellow will never know the difference." And although he had a good point, these are the most basic values that we struggle with or maybe a better word would be to say that's our challenge as we work with the refugee youth so that they understand the American system and what it entails to get a job and keep a job and be a good employee in the United States.

We often have guest speakers who come in to help keep things mixed up and changed up a little bit for interest. Some of the things that we do in our core employment curriculum that we use, which is from of the University of Missouri, is work with paperwork, how to keep a job, professional

behavior, hygiene, and relationships with others. This is really important; something we have to work very hard with. Decision-making and problem solving. That's using some of their technical skills and sometimes those critical thinking skills is something that also we really have to challenge them with. Work attitudes and habits of communicating to each other and to your supervisors. Applying for a job, that kind of information, and then the job interview itself.

Let me think if I've missed something for you here. We have, as I said about 25 - - well I think this summer we have 25 to 30 kids enrolled. We will usually place ten to 15 youth in summer jobs. Some of those jobs that we have are in the childcare industry and retirement homes, and, of course, the fast food industry. We place kids in computer labs. We have a children's museum here that kids have worked at. We've got a zoo where children have worked. They worked in the hospitals, in gift shops, and in some of our larger chain stores like Wal-Mart and Target.

Under Job Service, a youth who is enrolled in this program, and they're in the program until they formally tell Job Service they want to be out of the program, and they can stay in it from the years 14 through 21. They are the recipients of 300 to 400 hours of work experience. Job Service pays that salary for that student. So if I were to hire one of the youth that went through our work readiness program, Job Service would pay that youth's salary as well as their worker comp payment.

After 300 to 400 hours, if that particular individual is still interested in working in that location, they can formally apply for a position at that time and be hired on. The average salary is about \$6.00 - \$6.50 per hour and the retention is not too bad. We're fairly pleased. As I said, when we work with the refugee children there are several issues that we have here in addition to just learning how to be a good employee. There are a lot of cultural issues that we work with.

The goal is to have the kids meet their goal, whatever they have set. And that is what Job Service looks to CHARISM to achieve with the children.

We have been in the program for three years and we will submit another proposal to be funded for a fourth year. It's great opportunity for us because it allows us to reach an element in the youth population that we were unable to reach before with some of the after school programs and different kinds of activities that we had here. So this gets a kid of a different age in our doors. We, at CHARISM, believe that if they're in our doors learning good things it is so much better for them than if they are out on the street.

So we are very successful and I encourage others to contact their Department of Labor or their Job Service and see if this is something that is available to you. Thank you.

Vickie Schachter:

Thank you so much, Julie. It was very interesting to hear how CHARISM's year around program operates and reminds me of the days of settlement houses. For people who are listening into this call who come from urban areas, the settlement houses were a safe haven for youth in low-income neighborhoods.

Amanda, I'd like to turn this over to you for the question and answer session.

Operator:

Thank you. At this time, I would like to remind everyone if you would like to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. We'll pause for just one moment to compile the Q&A roster.

Your first question comes from the line of Ernesta Walker.

Ernesta Walker:

Yes. Am I on?

Vickie Schachter:

Yes, you are.

Ernesta Walker:

Okay. Good afternoon. The programs sound wonderful and I was just wondering because I'm right now writing a grant using WIA monies and one of the things that they're asking for is parental involvement. And I don't believe I heard any of you speak on that, but I would imagine that you do have parental involvement in your programs, and if you do I'd like to know the extent and some of the wonderful things that you're doing with the parents and the youth.

Steve Fields:

On our side what we've done is we have an orientation when the kids get selected and that orientation requires that parents come to that so they understand the work commit stuff because a lot of times there are things that they need like their Social Security numbers and birth certificates.

I don't know if you have the problem, Julie, but in this state I had the problem with refugees - - we had two refugees in the program last year and they could not work without validating who or what they were. They didn't have birth certificates and that kind of thing.

So what we've done now we have a parent advisory committee and they only meet maybe twice during the eight weeks and they come together and they give us real input from a parents perspective of what their kid is doing and how they can help out and what good input they can give into the program. So that is a definite plus in your program.

Ernesta Walker:

Thank you.

Julie Gunkelman:

At CHARISM, parental involvement in kids' lives is our number one challenge. I don't think we'd have the problems here if we had parents that were completely involved in their kids' lives. And they're not. So that - - having the parents involved in our work readiness program is not something that happens. They are involved - - sometimes they will refer their child but for the most part their only

involvement is that they fill out the paperwork and that is done through Job Service. The eligibility requirements for our program with Job Service is you have to be low income so they have to meet those requirements and fill out those particular forms but that's it. Once they do that their involvement is done and we work strictly with the kids.

I wish I had better ideas for you.

Ernesta Walker: Okay. Thank you.

Julie Gunkelman: I wish I did. We struggle with that in parenting classes. It's an ongoing struggle in our community.

Ernesta Walker: The gentlemen that just spoke I wasn't sure was that Steve Fields?

Steve Fields: Yes, that was me.

Ernesta Walker: Oh, okay. Thank you. I'll probably try and get - -

Steve Fields: Well it's just interesting. I like the fact that once you use private funding sometimes it's easy because you can do some of this other kind of stuff, so I mean I might even encourage you to look at the business sector and maybe get them involved in somehow enhancing your program. Not necessarily depending solely on some of your state and local funding.

Ernesta Walker: Okay. Thank you.

Operator: Again, if you would like to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. Your next question comes from the line of Lillian Johnson.

Lillian Johnson: Hi. I would like to - - I work with Work Plus here where I live in Havana, Florida, which is a very rural and very small area. We have a population of about 2,000. And the income is very, very low here, plus the education is very, very low here. I work with children, especially with the community

service kids that come from Juvenile Justice. I have about 40 children now. I also have about three children here from Work Plus, but I would like to implement some of your things that Mr. Brown spoke about and also Mr. Fields spoke about into the program that I'm trying to do here now for the work readiness program here that we're trying to do. Can you give me some input as to how can I use some of the things that you're using here at the center or can you fax it to me, or mail it to me, or email it to me so that I can implement some of these things that you're doing with the students that I'm working with here, if possible?

David Brown: This is David Brown. As I mentioned, much of the ideas that I talked about came from the program that are recognized through PEPNet.

Lillian Johnson: PEPNet?

David Brown: PEPNet, P-E-P-N-E-T. And if you go out our website then go to the PEPNet section of our website, there are actually profiles - -

Lillian Johnson: Okay. Is that www.N - -

David Brown: NYEC - - www.nyec.org

Lillian Johnson: Okay.

David Brown: And go to PEPNet, and there are profiles of many of the programs up there as well as contact information about the person you can call to get more information about their program. You can also search the program by elements of practice. So if you're interested in, lets say, family involvement or parental involvement, you can look at that element and see how the different programs that are recognized address that particular issue. So the index to effective practice and the profiles could be useful tools to learn about how other programs are implementing those strategies.

Lillian Johnson: Okay.

Steve Fields: This is Steve Fields here in Des Moines. In what context were you talking in terms of programming and services? What were you interested in?

Lillian Johnson: Well like trying to get involved in - - trying to get some of the students involved in learning how to do resumes, which I'm trying to teach them how to do resumes, dress codes, be responsible for their actions.

Steve Fields: Okay. One of the things it was nice to hear was that Julie was using a curriculum called Choices. I use a curriculum that's on each of my computer called Destination and it's an old software program. I don't know how many people are using it. It's an adult and adolescent learner software, and what it has is an array of educational and job opportunity sessions and what not for students. One hour a week they go through the Destination stuff. And you can actually go through the computer and set it up. They can do a session on resume. They can do a session on interviewing. They can do a session on math. They can do a session on reading. I can send you that information. Once again, I don't know if they are in existence but I kept the software because it is so wonderful - -

Lillian Johnson: Oh, please can you do that for me?

Steve Fields: Yes, I sure can. I think I can give you my email.

Lillian Johnson: Okay.

Steve Fields: It is sfields@oakridgeneighborhood.org.

David Brown: I can also add that on our website there's a one page - - there's a button right on the top left hand corner of our homepage with links to employment, education and training resources.

Lillian Johnson: For PEPNet?

David Brown: No, this is a different page. It's called employment training and educational links for young people and it gives you a lot of information about career

education, education information, and also resume writing and job readiness activities.

Lillian Johnson: Okay. Now you said that's employment?

David Brown: Yes. If you go into our Web site, on the top left hand side corner there is a green link. It Says "Links."

Lillian Johnson: Okay.

David Brown: It's mostly youth friendly Web sites that are designed for young people to learn about jobs and careers and educational opportunities.

Lillian Johnson: And you are Mr. Brown that I'm talking to now, right?

David Brown: Right.

Lillian Johnson: Okay. And that's with NYEC. Okay. Because I mean I work here with the children. I've been doing this since '95 and my main thing is try to keep them focused.

Steve Fields: Do you have anybody in the community that's helping you? Because one of the things that we had with our parent - -

Lillian Johnson: It's very hard to get the parents to help out here.

Steve Fields: Yes. They decided that mentoring was good and to find that mentor in the community that grandmother that's been working for 40 years and they key into that. We have two mentors that just come - - they're volunteer mentors that help out, but the students key into that a great deal. So maybe you want to try to have some job mentors in, once again, in your business community that can volunteer some time - -

Lillian Johnson: We don't have a business community here.

Steve Fields: You don't have? Okay.

Lillian Johnson: I mean if you come here where I live there's no buses here, there's no bus services; we have no parks here.

Steve Fields: But do you have - - I mean do you have I call it a "poky" or "peach" as somebody that the kids know that they respect that's involved in the community that could be a part of your program?

Lillian Johnson: Well I've tried a lot of the things like that, but since I'm housed here on a low rental apartment complex that they call the projects - -

Steve Fields: I'm at the same place. That's why I asked - -

Lillian Johnson: They don't want to come. It's like - -

Steve Fields: We're called the bricks and - -

Lillian Johnson: It's out of the area or there's always an excuse.

Steve Fields: Yes.

Lillian Johnson: And this is what hurts and it makes me angry because it's like well okay your children live here, they know the children that live here, but you don't want to come over and give any time here. And this thing with the parents. The parents don't want to get involved with the children that are here but they are their children.

Steve Fields: Are they involved in the input of what goes on?

Lillian Johnson: No.

Steve Fields: So you all provide services for them and just kind of don't have their nay or yea or say that they want it or not or - -

Lillian Johnson: There's a tenant association here. No one shows up. We started a rap session here with the parents and one or two show up and that's all it is. And the complex is - - it's a 60 unit complex. And I may get two parents out of it.

Steve Fields: We have the same issue. We have about 66 percent African American, five percent Sudanese, about two percent Latino and then we have an enormous percent of Southeast Asian here, particularly the second generation. So we have some really fantastic case managers that go out and sell - - not only sell it, but they get the residents to sell it because sometimes residents will follow residents kind of the peer to peer kind of thing.

Lillian Johnson: They don't even do that here. I mean where I live there are some that still do not have running water, would you believe?

Steve Fields: Oh.

Lillian Johnson: Or do not have electricity here. Believe that? This is the year 2004.

Steve Fields: So can you bring them in with that particular issue? Because sometimes you might have to bring them in with a different issue.

Lillian Johnson: I've tried that.

Steve Fields: Other than employment.

Lillian Johnson: I've tried that.

Steve Fields: Okay.

Lillian Johnson: It's like, you know, they've never worked except for in tobacco fields or cotton, you know, picking cotton, things like that. So they're afraid to make a change. It's so hard for the younger because they don't know how to make that change because the parents have never made that change.

Julie Gunkelman: I have that too, Lillian, here in Fargo and I work with a 181-unit complex.

Lillian Johnson: Okay.

Julie Gunkelman: As well as I think there 200 trailer courts right across the street and we too struggle with that same thing as how do we get the parents to get involved.

Lillian Johnson: It's hard.

Julie Gunkelman: It is very hard. It is very hard. So what we - -

Lillian Johnson: It's heartbreaking when you see the children are going down.

Julie Gunkelman: Yes. So we - -

Lillian Johnson: Low self-esteem.

Julie Gunkelman: ...have focused on trying to find something that interests the kids to get them in the door.

Lillian Johnson: And keeping them in the door when you get them in there.

Julie Gunkelman: To keep them in the door. My after school - - our youth development pieces are all focused on sort of like summer camp everyday and we decided that it was better to invest in the children and maybe prevent something from happening than to try and change minds that are so difficult to change.

And so we worked really hard with having fun activities. We do a lot of literacy. We do a lot of arts and crafts kinds of things. We do a lot of music, that kind of thing to get them to come in and once you can develop a relationship, and it would be wonderful if you could have other people help you. It's a lot to take on for one person.

Lillian Johnson: Yes it is.

Steve Fields: Julie, and that - -

Julie Gunkelman: We talk to the kids and get them to decide. We had youth boards that ask: What do you want to do? What's important to you? What would you like to see happen and how will you help make it happen? and slowly it worked. Slowly it worked. So now

we're very successful with that. See if you can identify a couple of leaders in your youth, a couple of kids who are willing to just kind of visit with you and talk with you and say this is something we'd like to do.

Lillian Johnson: Well I have a couple that is willing to do this with me.

Julie Gunkelman: There you go.

Lillian Johnson: It's so hard to keep them focused on what they want to do.

Julie Gunkelman: Yes, it is and it's also hard because I think lots of times their ideas aren't our ideas.

Lillian Johnson: Right.

Julie Gunkelman: Yes, that's something I had to learn as well is what I thought kids wanted to do was not what the kids wanted to do.

Lillian Johnson: Right.

Julie Gunkelman: And so - -

Lillian Johnson: I asked them first I said what do you want to do and how are we going to do this. We can do it like this when you do it like this. Okay. Let's get started. And then as we get started it's like "Well, we can't get the help" and then they get discouraged and they're like okay. I'm here like 20 miles from Tallahassee, which is the capitol, well we can't get the people from Tallahassee to really come over and work with the children over here. So that's hard.

Julie Gunkelman: Yes, it is.

Lillian Johnson: Not having any transportation there are no jobs here for them. We have one fast food restaurant here which is Subway and that's it. There's no bus service here. We have one grocery store here. We have loads and loads of antique shops here but they don't do the children any good. They're so high

you can't work there or spend your money here. So any income that comes into Havana goes out to Tallahassee because there's nowhere to spend your money here. There's no job here for them to get involved in. There's two daycare centers here.

Julie Gunkelman:

Could they set up their own ice cream shop or their own, you know, some kind of little food place for all of these tourists that are coming through and buying all the antiques? Could they do something entrepreneurial?

Lillian Johnson:

No. No. Nothing. We have two - - one grocery store, two service stations here, and that's about it. And like I say, it's hard to get the children involved in something when they tell me they say why should I learn this when I have no means of getting out of Havana to do anything with it. That's discouraging right here.

Julie Gunkelman:

That's very discouraging.

Lillian Johnson:

So how do I work with that? I mean it's like, you know, I came - - I moved here from Miami about eight years ago and I started doing this - - I started teaching literacy up here and this is what made me get involved in the center. And I found that the center volunteer here everyday five days a week, myself and another lady, and I mean it's like pulling teeth.

Steve Fields:

What are they interested in? What is your community - - what I find I have a very young parent population so one of the things that I had to do was call a parents night out. That means you all can come and hip-hop, there's massaging, there's food, there's movies, the whole bit. What are they -
-

Lillian Johnson:

We have no movies up here. We have to go to Tallahassee for it.

Steve Fields:

Yes, but you bring in - - you've got a television and a VCR?

Lillian Johnson: Yes.

Steve Fields: Use it. Use the basic model. What are they interested, you know, I mean are they young? Do they party? Anything that you can pack on to that they're interested in so you can have them in a room so you can talk about some of this stuff because it sounds like you've got a lot of community issues that people probably have an opinion about that probably have never sat down at a table to talk about.

Lillian Johnson: We do.

Steve Fields: That you can start doing that, and then roll and talk about some of this other stuff.

Lillian Johnson: Okay.

Steve Fields: I mean is it a young population of low income that you have? Is it mostly Hispanic? Is it mostly - -

Lillian Johnson: It's 99.9 black.

Steve Fields: Okay.

Lillian Johnson: We have about - - I would say 99 percent black and one percent white. No Hispanic. And that's it.

Steve Fields: Okay. Now I'm just saying for myself because I'm African American and I know how we roll and - -

Lillian Johnson: And so I am.

Steve Fields: And I know there are certain things that will bring us out.

Lillian Johnson: Right.

Steve Fields: Food and good soul food will bring us out.

Lillian Johnson: I've done that.

Steve Fields: But also the music. And we've done really major community events where we've had rappers come

or there's a rap contest or there's a talent contest or there's something that will bring the people out; if they're into church some kind of event that will bring them out so you can start talking with them and talking about these issues and what not.

Lillian Johnson:

Well I started a youth crime watch rally up here six years ago. This is our sixth year doing it. May 29th this year will be our sixth year doing it. And I started to get the people together. We have people come up from maybe 700 to 1,000 that come out on that day and all the food is free, all the activities are free. I go out and we beg for, you know, for donations for the things that we do with them. That brings them out, but after that day they're right back to their same old self again. It's like okay we'll do it for this day because the food is here but and then we have an event maybe twice - - two or three times a year.

Vickie Schachter:

Ms. Johnson?

Lillian Johnson:

Yes, ma'am.

Vickie Schachter:

I think that both Julie and Steve have kind of touched on some of the things you might want to try I recognize that it's difficult within the economic parameters that you're operating in. I have been through Havana, which is outside of Tallahassee.

Lillian Johnson:

Okay.

Vickie Schachter:

Havana is very small and very rural. But it actually sounds like if you persevere and can identify some youth leaders as well as perhaps one or two adult leaders and persevere with what you're doing you will ultimately be successful in developing a cadre of youth that you can serve.

Lillian Johnson:

Okay.

Vickie Schachter:

I don't think we can solve all your problems on this call.

Lillian Johnson: Oh, no, but I'm getting a lot of good ideas.

Vickie Schachter: I think - - I think that Julie and Steve have provided you with some good ideas and David has also provided you with a place on the Internet to get some really sound resources as well.

Lillian Johnson: Okay. May I give you my e-mail so we can keep in touch if possible, please?

Vickie Schachter: Yes.

Lillian Johnson: For all of you? Okay. It's marvinj38@yahoo.com.

Vickie Schachter: Thank you.

Lillian Johnson: Thank you very much.

Vickie Schachter: You're welcome, Ms. Johnson. Amanda, do we have any other questions?

Operator: Yes. Your next question is from Jenny Albert.

Jenny Albert: Yes. Hello? Can you hear me?

Steve Fields: Yes, Jenny.

Jenny Albert: We had the summer youth program since 1993 and two years ago we were funded by the city every year and about two years ago they didn't have no funding and we didn't know where to get more resources. Now my question is I hear Mr. Brown saying that there are some federal resources for this and also somebody mentioned about private industry. How do they - - how do we approach and what can we get from them?

David Brown: Well in terms of the federal resources as I mentioned, the summer youth employment program, which had been around since the '60s was no longer funded as a separate program so there's no longer the dedicated funding for summer jobs that there used to be at the federal level. But as I mentioned about North Dakota, there is still funding

though the Workforce Investment Act that is supporting year round youth activities that include summer programming for young people, and that money is funneled to local workforce boards across the country.

In North Dakota it happens that the workforce board is a statewide board. That's why CHARISM is working with the state of North Dakota in North Dakota. But for many communities, it's a city or a county or multicountry workforce board that administers those funds. They are competitively awarded and like I said, it's mostly for year round services, although there are some limited resources available for summer only activities.

Jenny Albert: We have some California. How do we find out which is - -

David Brown: What area in California are you in?

Jenny Albert: Los Angeles.

David Brown: Los Angeles. There is a Los Angeles workforce board. Both the city and the county have workforce boards in Los Angeles and it's very competitive but it's the same agency that probably funded you under the summer youth employment program that still administers those funds, but now it's not limited just - - it's probably being used for year round activities, not just for summer jobs anymore.

Jenny Albert: Okay. Okay. So but how do we find out who are they?

David Brown: The city also - - I know they had some money a couple of years to use - - they used TANF dollars in the city also to support summer jobs so there are - - so you have to find out who the - - we work with them actually in Los Angeles. I could find that out for you.

Jenny Albert: Okay. Can you send me the information through the e-mail?

David Brown: Yes. What's your email address?

Jenny Albert: awfmex@aol.com

David Brown: awfmex@aol.com

Jenny Albert: That is correct.

David Brown: Okay. I will send you the information about the people to contact in Los Angeles. Is it Los Angeles City or Los Angeles County?

Jenny Albert: City.

David Brown: City. Okay.

Jenny Albert: But private industry - - how do you involve them?

Steve Fields: Well first I'd like to ask how are you all funded? How are you programs funded? Is it just state and local monies or are there some private monies there that you're funded with?

Jenny Albert: It was local and that was how the kids come to us. We used to have between 40 to 75 kids every summer.

Steve Fields: Okay.

Jenny Albert: And we also had supervisors of those kids who would be some of the parents also.

Steve Fields: Okay.

Jenny Albert: That's how we got them involved.

Steve Fields: Okay. So you have no other funding source other than just that?

Jenny Albert: That's right.

Steve Fields: Okay. I guess, and I don't know much about that particular area, I can tell you what we did was we really had to put our proposal together in 1996 and

really make it a community effort. If you want to invest in these youths, there are some of the activities that you can invest them and help the youth and one of those was employment.

We particularly here we really talked about the importance of youth being involved in activities other than criminal activities. Once again this is Oakridge and we have a very high number of youth. Matter of fact, disproportionate minority youth that are incarcerated so one of our issues that we talked about was we have a lot of youth that are going to jail and we need to have alternative activities for them to do and activities that are going to enhance their educational opportunities, their job opportunities, and then we put that proposal together and we shot that to whoever that would listen.

So I don't know your community. I don't know what your build up is in terms of private sector or business sector, but that's something that we did here that you'd probably have to do for yourself. Do you have a board that solicits funds for your program?

Jenny Albert:

Yes, we do.

Steve Fields:

Okay. Have they talked about soliciting to other companies about this particular issue about the summer youth employment issue?

Jenny Albert:

Well not yet because we closed the program and now we decided we want to open it again.

Steve Fields:

Because you might have some wonderful data on how that program has helped those youth that once again I think a lot of private and business sector like to look at outcome measurements and you might have some wonderful things that you do, you know, they just need to be laid out in proposal form and make an attempt to - -

Jenny Albert:

We have a lot of data.

Steve Fields: Yes. Make use of that date. Sometimes you don't, but an attempt with some of those business and private sector individuals. They live for this. They really do.

Jenny Albert: Yes. Okay. Well it has been very useful everything that we've heard here today.

Vickie Schachter: Amanda, do we have any other questions?

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Bob Hamilton.

Bob Hamilton: Are you ready?

Vickie Schachter: Yes.

Bob Hamilton: Okay. Yes. I operate a technology center in a HUD funded senior citizens complex. I've had youth programs and I've also had programs with the science course people from CTC. My question is whether Neighborhood Networks has tried to partner with the people from the Workforce Investment Act and I think that would give us a better link to the summer youth programs.

Vickie Schachter: That's a really interesting question and a very good one as well. The Workforce Investment Act, and David Brown can probably correct me if I'm wrong, but the Workforce Investment Act provides block grants to the state. Am I correct so far?

David Brown: Yes, it's the grants to the states and there is one youth funding stream and then those monies are allocated by formula to local communities - - local workforce boards.

Vickie Schachter: Right. So a national partner - - there is no national workforce investment board that Neighborhood Networks could partner with. However, local Neighborhood Networks in a particular state could, as a consortia or a group, approach their state workforce investment board to talk about some of the issues that they would like to confront with their youth and see if they can enter into a dialogue on

the state level and then be connected on their local level with some of the decision makers who control funding.

David Brown:

Yes,, there's both - - under the Act they establish both state workforce investment boards and local workforce investment boards and under the auspices of the local boards they've also established youth councils which are supposed to be responsible for but not made up of young people but made up of community stakeholders. Public Housing Authority officials are one of the groups that's listed in the Act to help inform how to best coordinate and allocate those resources in that community, and the youth council often makes decisions about how to allocate those youth dollars to programs in that community.

So if you can connect to your local workforce boards and also try to connect to the youth staff and the youth council, they're the ones you should trying to connect to and even, if possible, seeing if you can get several on the youth council.

Bob Hamilton:

I understand that, but I was thinking on a national level. Doesn't the Department of Labor oversee the Workforce Investment Act?

David Brown:

Yes. There is a youth office in the Department of Labor that oversees that program, yes.

Vickie Schachter:

And Neighborhood Networks does have a partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration One stop Centers, but it is not specific to youth. However, I would be happy to investigate that further for you, Mr. Hamilton.

Bob Hamilton:

Appreciate it.

Vickie Schachter:

Thank you.

Operator:

At this time there are no further questions.

Vickie Schachter:

Okay. Well at this time I think we will close this conference call. I would like to thank our three speakers - David Brown from NYEC, Steve Fields from Oakridge Neighborhood Networks Learning Center, and Julie Gunkelman from CHARISM community center. I know that I have learned a lot today about youth programs and the critical importance of them and the difficulties that conveners and organizers and sponsors of those programs face in order to put together a cohesive and impactful program for low income youth. We're appreciative of the efforts of all of you.

I hope that you'll join us at next month's conference call and thank you very much for your participation.

Julie Gunkelman:

Thank you.

Steve Fields:

Thank you.

David Brown:

Thank you.

Operator:

This concludes today's conference call. You may now disconnect.

[End of conference call]